

GREETING!

"The Presbyterian of the South" salutes you! You are asked to recognize in it old friends and well wishers. The journals which it embraces and for which it now stands have not passed away. All of them greet you here. Instead of looking into the face of one, you are bid to see all of them. The new simply comprises the old, but brings to you the old larger, better, fuller, more helpful.

Do you ask where "The Presbyterian of the South" stands and for what its testimony and work will be given? It hesitates not a moment to reply that it stands for the old faith and for our Church. Its purpose is to maintain the principles and standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, to do its part to preserve the integrity and the doctrines of that Church. It believes that her historic attitude has been fully justified. It believes that the perpetuation of her existence and principles will make for the glory of the kingdom of Christ.

The old faith is well worth battling for. The object is of sufficient dignity and importance to justify the struggle. A divinely inspired Bible as the sole source of authority, a divinely devised scheme of grace as the sufficient means of redemption, a divine Spirit as the new creator by regeneration, the efficacy of the blood of Christ as a substitute, the gift of faith and repentance, the movings of the regenerate heart, the absolute certainty of future reward and punishment, the impossibility and unscripturalness of either a probation after death or a remedial power in the sentence of the justly condemned, these are old truths. But no truth is weaker for age. The years only show its mightiness and significance.

Our Church has been given a mission in the world. It is said, not in boastfulness but because it has been so often asserted by those outside, that this Church represents today the purest type of Presbyterianism in doctrine and polity in the world. In this day, when many have departed from the line which God has set in his Word as to the Church's function in witnessing, and especially in witnessing for the fundamental principle of the spirituality of his kingdom, our Church has maintained a firm and consistent position. This testimony became our Church's first duty, and to this day she stands distinctively for this. Her history as a separate organization has been linked into this duty and doctrine. In that vital connection she has had success and has been given a place in the sisterhood of Churches. The time has not yet come for her to disconnect herself from this great principle and testimony in order that she might get herself into a more imposing company, a greater marshalling of hosts.

And not alone as to the theological principle of the spirituality of the Church, Christ's kingdom, is there need for her to testify. She has occasion just now to lift her voice against that form of the denial of this principle which is found in the too common resort to human means and methods to strengthen and propagate the Church and her faith and to build up her numbers. She is to set her face like a flint against any over-organiza-

tion and over-methodizing which may obscure the divine organization and the divine method or which may menace our reliance upon the Spirit of God to do the work. She should be in full sympathy with all progress, and should be willing to adapt herself to all changes in conditions around her with sanctified common sense and with loving, Christian charity towards all who differ from her, but she is never for a moment to forget the cardinal fact, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

With this declaration of its fundamental principles and position, the combined paper again greets you!

AFTER CHRISTMAS.

Now that the season is past, may it not be asked in all seriousness if Christmas is not coming to be a little overdone? Are there not too many expectations aroused in connection with it? Have not too many come to regard certain features of it, in which they share and profit, as a matter of course? Is there not an overplus of toil and care and worry and expense? Is not the day over-observed?

Not for a moment should any one desire to call a halt on its expression or exhibition of love, nor should any wish to lessen the brightness of it to little or colder hearts. Scant sympathy is due those who in over-much conscientiousness would do away with Santa Claus or who deem the happy Christmas fiction a sin. Those who would lessen the love and joy of the season are men in whose breasts is little of the milk of human kindness. Any who would take from the children, especially, the brightness of the time by casting over them the gloom of their own hearts would soon sour that milk by their very looks should it happen to be about them.

Those who regard the myth of Santa as a sin forget that it is but a figure, a poem in its beauty and expressiveness, that resolves a principle into a person, a beautiful impersonation of an idea. They should throw away their Bunyan for the same reason for which they would exile that happy embodiment of affection and kindness which the child world has come to regard as the great dispenser of good things to good children. The very mystery of the fictitious personage is a happy setting of the principle of love giving without recognition, the left hand not knowing what the right hand has done. There is no danger of idolatry in it. It is not so much paganism as it is poetry.

Yet for all this there is danger of overdoing. Christmas itself may be worn out, as one has put it, by being overworked. The extraordinary work and worry and waste put into it may cause a reaction. The element of surprise may be taken entirely away from it; indeed, it has already been taken away in the main. A return to sane methods will tend to preserve it as a happy, sweet season of loving deeds rather than of splendid gifts, of kind acts rather than of priceless gems, of home coming and home gathering, of reunion and rejoicing, rather than of added toil and care. S.